

Extreme Weather Support for People Sleeping Rough

Strategic Alignment - Our Community

Public

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City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to Council's decision of 10 March 2026 asking the Administration to prepare a report by mid-April 2026, to 'assist the Council in ensuring that no rough sleeper in the City of Adelaide seeking safety from extreme weather will be denied shelter in the winter of 2026'.

In considering the primary question about the provision of 'safe, temporary accommodation during the declaration of Code Blue Tier 2 Activation' within Council-owned premises, Administration met with representatives from the Department of Human Services (DHS), Baptist Care SA (WestCare), the Hutt Street Centre and the South Australia Housing Trust to inform the report and recommendations. Through the Council of Capital City Lord Mayor's network Administration sought and received information about the extreme weather responses of different Australian capital cities.

The conclusion from DHS and extreme weather service delivery partners is that within the CBD, emergency accommodation has sufficient capacity to meet the needs of adult men and women, though considerations remain around individual preferences and specific cohort needs.

Accessing overnight temporary accommodation, even in extreme and severe weather events, is complicated, and people entrenched in sleeping rough may prefer to access respite and a meal before returning to the streets or Adelaide Park Lands overnight.

Information from State Government Agencies and service providers indicates that the following cohorts may currently be underserved during Code events:

- Young people (under 25 years old).
- Women (single and/or with/without children).
- People with pets.

Recommendations for the safety of people sleeping rough in extreme weather include:

- Expansion of care packages.
 - Development of an Extreme Weather Response Protocol.
 - Advocate and explore in collaboration with the DHS potential opportunities to better address cohorts currently underserved.
 - Continued advocacy to the State Government for permanent supportive housing and transitional accommodation as the primary and long term response to homelessness and rough sleeping.
 - Connecting current Council supports through transport services to existing overnight emergency accommodation.
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RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 14 April 2026 for consideration

THAT THE CITY PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL

THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the findings of the report to Council into the use of Council owned community and/or business properties for safe, temporary accommodation is that accommodation needs are currently being met by specialist homelessness service providers as contained in Item 7.2 on the Agenda for the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee held on 7 April 2026.
 2. Notes overnight accommodation for people sleeping rough during extreme weather is the responsibility of the State Government, and that existing services provided by the City of Adelaide to support the safety and wellbeing of people sleeping rough include:
 - 2.1. Distribution of public information.
 - 2.2. Libraries and community centres acting as heat and weather refuges during normal operating hours and availability of care packages.
 - 2.3. Referrals to Homelessness Connect.
 - 2.4. Community Safety review of enforcement of cease camping notices.
 3. Notes the following proposed actions by the City of Adelaide to increase the safety and wellbeing of rough sleepers:
 - 3.1. Expansion of the care packages provided through the libraries and community centres to also include a beanie and socks during winter months and a hat and sunscreen during summer months (subject to 2026/27 budget deliberations).
 - 3.2. Development of an Extreme Weather Response Protocol for people sleeping rough in the City of Adelaide, which outlines roles and responsibilities, including strengthened communication about the availability and offerings of City of Adelaide premises.
 - 3.3. Explore in collaboration with the Department of Human Services potential opportunities with Safe Pets, Safe Families to support people with pets during extreme weather events.
 - 3.4. Continued advocacy to the State Government for permanent supportive housing and transitional accommodation as the primary response to sleeping rough and homelessness.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	<p>Strategic Alignment – Our Community</p> <p>Our Objective is to: Support our communities to thrive</p> <p>Key Action: Work with partners to identify new and innovative ways to reduce rough sleeping and homelessness.</p>
Policy	<p>The City of Adelaide’s Homelessness Strategy – Everyone’s Business, includes a bold move in relation to Emergency Shelter which states:</p> <p><i>In partnership with the South Australian Homelessness Alliance, investigate whether the City of Adelaide community infrastructure is made available in response to extreme heat and cold weather such as State Government announcements of Code Red and Code Blue.</i></p>
Consultation	<p>Administration has engaged with the following agencies and organisations to inform this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Human Services (DHS) • Baptist Care SA (WestCare) • Hutt Street Centre • SA Housing Trust.
Resource	<p>Expansion of care packages available in the City of Adelaide’s libraries and community facilities. Consideration of extending and/or adjusting the opening hours for libraries and community centres depends on the outcome of the current libraries review.</p>
Risk / Legal / Legislative	<p>Not as a result of this report</p>
Opportunities	<p>Development of a City of Adelaide Extreme Weather Response Protocol for people sleeping rough. Expansion of the care packages provided through the libraries and community centres.</p>
25/26 Budget Allocation	<p>Not as a result of this report</p>
Proposed 26/27 Budget Allocation	<p>To be considered as part of the 2026/27 budget bid process. An allocation of \$3,000 to supply beanies, socks, hats and sunscreen to expand the care packages would be required. Distribution and uptake would be monitored throughout 2026/27 to assess the level of provision required in future years.</p>
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	<p>Subject to Council decision, the expansion of care packages and/or adjusted library and community centre operating hours could be ongoing (subject to annual review).</p>
25/26 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	<p>Not as a result of this report</p>
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	<p>To be reviewed for 2027/28 Annual Business Plan and Budget process.</p>
Other Funding Sources	<p>Opportunity to explore funding sources through State Government funding and partnerships with other not-for-profit organisations.</p>

DISCUSSION

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to respond to Council's decision of 10 March 2026 asking the Administration to prepare a report by mid-April 2026, to 'assist the Council in ensuring that no rough sleeper in the City of Adelaide seeking safety from extreme weather will be denied shelter in the winter of 2026'.
2. The decision seeks exploration of options to make Council owned community and/or business properties available for temporary accommodation during Tier 2 weather events, as follows:

'Consistent with the commentary at para 12 of Item 17.3 on February 10th (and noting the resolution of Council at Item 17.1 at the meeting of February 24th, 2026) asks the Administration to assist Council in ensuring that no rough sleeper in the City of Adelaide seeking safety from extreme weather will be denied shelter in the winter of 2026 by preparing a report for Council consideration by the middle of next month that;

 1. *Details which Council owned community and/or business properties could be turned into safe, temporary accommodation during the declaration of Code Blue Tier 2 Activations as a trial program between the beginning of June and the end of August, 2026*
 2. *The report should:*
 - 2.1. *Detail optimum operating hours, assuming shelter and any necessary support service would be provided complementary to and in addition to the hours of operation of existing accommodation and/or service providers*
 - 2.2. *Quantify, through discussion with existing accommodation and service providers the likely number of rough sleepers not accommodated by current rough sleeper venues and services for whom shelter could be provided*
 - 2.3. *Scope the nature of the shelter to be provided by Council and any desirable accompanying services*
 - 2.4. *Identify potential sources of State Government and homelessness sector support, including the provision of funding and/or personnel*
 - 2.5. *Calculate the likely cost of the initiative to City of Adelaide through any required reconsideration of the 25/26 Budget associated with the QF3 report to Council and for the 26/27 budget deliberations, including costings for staff resourcing, security and specialist expertise required, and*
 - 2.6. *Advise of any other relevant issues to assist in the successful completion of the trial.'*
3. Sister Janet Mead's Adelaide Day Centre for Homeless Persons Incorporated wrote to the Office of the Chief Executive Officer in March 2026 in support of an investigation into making more Council properties available for emergency accommodation for rough sleepers per the Council's March decision.

Background

4. Weather conditions such as excessive heat and cold can pose a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of people sleeping rough.
5. The Rough Sleeper Extreme Weather Response (RS EWR) is led by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and supports people rough sleeping during periods of severe or extreme weather across South Australia.
6. The State Government, through the DHS, is currently undertaking an Extreme Weather Response Review, of which the City of Adelaide is a member of the Steering Committee. The State Government's review and recommendations are due to be finalised by 30 June 2026.

7. DHS defines Tier 1 and Tier 2 responses as follows:

	Tier 1 Response by Service Agencies	Tier 2 Response by Service Agencies
Code Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of water, sunscreen, hats, hydration sachets, etc. • Extended daytime hours and staff • Identifying heat watch clients to be prioritised • Provide maps of where to find air-conditioned public spaces and drinking fountains. • Provide heat-related information to clients including how to cope with heat stress and how to recognise the signs of heat stress. • Provide emergency services contact list to clients. 	Everything in Tier 1 plus: Emergency accommodation in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals to existing shelters • Hotel/motel for clients identified through risk assessment as heat watch clients • Outreach support to hotel/ motel clients.
Code Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of hot drinks and meals, bedding, blankets, sleeping bags and warm clothes • Maps of where to find heated public spaces • Provide Emergency services contact lists to clients • Extended daytime hours and staff 	
Severe Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same services available under Tier 1 for code red and blue. 	

Source: Department of Human Services (DHS)

8. Overnight accommodation is currently only available in a Tier 2 response.

Capacity of the Tier 2 Response

- To assist with the preparation of the report in the short time available, Administration met with relevant State Government Agencies and existing service providers and relied on their data and experience to determine if there is a shortfall and need for additional accommodation within the existing system.
- In metropolitan Adelaide, WestCare (under Baptist Care SA) is funded by the DHS to provide overnight shelter during Tier 2 Code Red and Code Blue responses for people who don't have access to adequate shelter (and likely rough sleeping) during extreme or severe weather events.
- The site at WestCare has the capacity to cater for up to 50 people overnight and includes two separate indoor spaces, a general area and a women-only area.
- Since October 2024, there have been 10 Tier 2 Code Red or Cold Blue events activated by the DHS in the City of Adelaide.
- Over this same period, the WestCare site has had an average usage of 60% or approximately 30 beds. There has only been one Tier 2 Code Red where WestCare was at 100% capacity. This was associated with a heat wave that extended over multiple consecutive days and nights.
- Homeless Connect SA is also available during an activation to consider other accommodation options (such as a motel or hotel) for people for whom WestCare may not be a suitable option.
- Information from State Government Agencies and service providers indicates that securing motel or hotel accommodation can be challenging during periods when major events are taking place across the city.
- During a Tier 2 Code Red or Code Blue, Hutt Street Centre extend their opening hours to provide support and services for people at risk or experiencing homelessness. Extended opening hours can vary but are typically from 1:00pm to 4:30pm Monday to Friday and until 12:00pm on Saturday depending on staff availability and overall need.

People sleeping rough seeking shelter in extreme weather

- Information from State Government Agencies and service providers indicates that the following cohorts may currently be underserved during Code events:

- 17.1. Young people (under 25 years old). Currently WestCare only accepts people aged over 18 years.
- 17.2. Women (single and/or with/without children), noting that women are eligible for accommodation through Homeless Connect emergency accommodation during extreme weather events and can also stay at WestCare.
- 17.3. People with pets.
- 18. Accommodating young people and people with pets on a short-term basis adds further complexity to the extreme weather response. St John's Youth have a 30-bed facility within the City of Adelaide, providing crisis accommodation, including through Homeless Connect in extreme weather events.
- 19. Administration is aware of a not-for-profit organisation, Safe Pets, Safe Families, that provides foster care to temporarily home pets for people experiencing domestic violence, homelessness or sickness. Administration will explore, in collaboration with DHS, potential opportunities with Safe Pets, Safe Families to support people with pets during extreme weather activations.

Council owned community and/or business properties

- 20. Council has raised the previous use of the Adelaide Central Bus Station and whether that could again be made available in extreme weather events.
 - 20.1. Adelaide Central Bus Station, located at 83 Franklin Street, Adelaide, operates from 6:00am to 8:30pm, seven days a week.
 - 20.2. During opening hours, it accommodates a high number of bus services throughout the day and night. On average there are 465 departures and 421 arrivals per month, 15 departures and 14 arrivals per day, respectively.
 - 20.3. The Bus Station has previously been used for overnight shelter during extreme and severe weather events; this arrangement pre-dates the current services available at WestCare.
 - 20.4. The lobby area is currently used informally by some individuals seeking temporary shelter and access to the toilet facilities. Anecdotally, this has presented challenges relating to anti-social behaviour.
 - 20.5. The service counters and various areas of the Bus Station concourse are subject to commercial leases to various coach operators. Any changes would require consultation with operators.
 - 20.6. The building is community titled with Common Ground who own the apartments above. Any changes to the use of the building may require approval from the body corporate.
- 21. Advice from State Government Agencies and service providers indicates that doubling resources across multiple sites can be challenging to manage and staff effectively, often yielding minimal additional benefit or serving few, if any, extra clients.
- 22. WestCare has advised that they currently do not have additional capacity to staff or partner with Council to operate or support another site within the city.
- 23. As discussed by Council in response to another Motion on Notice on 24 February 2026 and in ongoing discussions about Aboriginal and remote visitors, the pressing need within the city is for permanent supportive and/or transitional accommodation.
- 24. Administration's recommendation is that the current provision of temporary accommodation in extreme weather events is adequate though considerations remain around individual preferences and specific cohort needs. Supplementing with additional accommodation is complex and could undermine the existing efforts of DHS and Baptist Care SA.
- 25. As Council's request seeks safety for people sleeping rough from extreme weather, Administration advises of the following Council premises that may provide temporary respite and shelter during extreme weather but do not include overnight accommodation:
 - 25.1. Adelaide Central Bus Station (refer above).
 - 25.2. Minor Works Building Community Centre which is open Monday and Wednesday to Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm and Tuesday from 9:30am to 5:00pm.
 - 25.3. North Adelaide Library and Community Centre which is open Monday to Wednesday and Friday from 10:00am to 6:00pm, Thursday from 10:00am to 8:00pm, and Saturday from 11:00am to 2:00pm.
 - 25.4. Hutt Street Library which is open Monday to Friday from 10:00am to 5:00pm and Saturday from 10:00am to 2:00pm.
 - 25.5. City Library (noting the City Library is in the process of moving to a new site on North Terrace).

- 25.6. Adelaide Town Hall which is open to the public Monday to Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm.
- 25.7. Adelaide Central Market which is open for business Tuesday to Saturday at varying times between 7:00am and 9:00pm.
- 25.8. Rundle Mall which is open Monday to Thursday from 9:00am to 5:30pm, Friday from 9:00am to 9:00pm and Saturday and Sunday from 9:00am to 5:00pm.

Other opportunities and measures

- 26. The measures outlined below relate to options that can build on existing work by the City of Adelaide as day time respite, noting that overnight capacity is accommodated for in the system and that the State Government and various service providers that Administration engaged with in finalising this report spoke to maintaining current lines of responsibility and the challenges in getting appropriately qualified staff to cover an even wider spread of sites with overnight care.

Libraries and community centres

- 27. The City of Adelaide could improve on the existing access to safe, climate-controlled daytime spaces that provide respite during periods of extreme or severe weather. This may include:
 - 27.1. Extending and/or adjusting operating hours of libraries and community centres as places of refuge, comfort, and support.
 - 27.2. Whilst the current review being undertaken as part of the relocation of the City Library from Rundle Place to North Terrace is looking at operating hours, any extension of time will have resourcing impacts.
 - 27.3. Expanding care packages provided through the libraries and community centres to include a beanie and socks during winter months and a hat and sunscreen during summer months could be instituted.
 - 27.4. Communication to individuals that these care packages are available will need to be incorporated, noting that the care packages are currently provided through donations.

Community buildings in the Adelaide Park Lands

- 28. Administration proposes engaging with Community Groups who may consider providing access to buildings in the Adelaide Park Lands during extreme weather events. As per the above example, this would be during the day, with a need to connect people to relevant services when a code red or blue is called for overnight accommodation.
- 29. In this context the use of existing community facilities during the day would still need careful planning, clear protocols, and an assessment of the resourcing to support the safety and wellbeing of the community, support workers and volunteers.

Public infrastructure

- 30. Advice from Hutt Street Centre is that additional infrastructure in the public realm would support their service provision and tolerance towards their clients.
- 31. They referenced a public toilet on the eastern side of Hutt Road and additional bin provision in Carriageway Park / Tuthangga (Park 17) and Peppermint Park / Wita Wirra (Park 18) as examples.
 - 31.1. A new Exeloo toilet is being commissioned in Park 17 near the corner of Greenhill Road and Beaumont Road.
 - 31.2. The existing public toilet facility, located near the corner of Greenhill Road and Glen Osmond Road, will be demolished following the completion of the new toilet which is expected to be completed in May 2026.
 - 31.3. There are currently five public bins and three public drinking fountains (including one located at the corner of South Terrace and Hutt Road) available in Park 17.
 - 31.4. Additional public bins and public drinking fountains are also available in the surrounding Adelaide Park Lands.
- 32. Additional supporting public infrastructure through the city and the Adelaide Park Lands could include:
 - 32.1. Expanding the network and availability of accessible 24/7 public toilets in line with the City of Adelaide Public Toilet Strategy.
 - 32.2. Expanding the network of public drinking fountains, which are referenced in our Social Infrastructure and Asset Management planning work.
 - 32.3. Increasing the provision and waste collection of public bins.

- 32.4. Investigating options to provide showers and lockers as outlined in the City of Adelaide's Homelessness Strategy.
- 32.5. Investigating options for a pet holding facility within the city to support individuals with pets.
- 32.6. Investigating supported mobile cooling hubs, in partnership with the State Government, Toward Home Alliance and relevant service providers.

Extreme Weather Response Protocol

- 33. Improve communication of extreme weather response across stakeholders via the development of a City of Adelaide Extreme Weather Response Protocol for people sleeping rough in partnership with DHS, Toward Home Alliance and other partners.

Advocacy for the City of Adelaide

- 34. Advocating to the State Government for the provision of permanent supportive housing and transitional accommodation in the city.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

- END OF REPORT -